

Appendix D
Refocusing Secondary Education (Update)
Highlights and Examples of Progress

The Secondary Agenda : By 2014, every Kentucky student will persist to high school graduation and transition to further learning supported by a culture of high expectations and a plan of intentional focus that leads to success in learning, work and citizenship.

The following are highlights of state and local activity and examples of progress related to the five essential principles of the Secondary Agenda:

I. Every student is actively engaged in high quality, real world learning.

- Implementation of new school designs
Kenton County exhibited leadership in school redesign by reorganizing their three comprehensive high schools and Area Technology Center into “schools of study” with high rigor and high relevance for every student. Students will approach core academics and electives within the context of the school of study chosen. Kenton is partnering with local business and higher education to provide opportunities for highly relevant learning experiences outside the classroom.
- Math and science education through a career pathway
Nelson County, along with several other districts, is engaged in Project Lead the Way, which introduces math and science concepts through the scope, rigor and discipline of engineering. These initiatives benefit from partnerships with local colleges and business for internships, cooperative experiences and dual credit. The Council on Postsecondary Education and the Department are collaborating to expand pre-engineering programs through partnerships between local districts, postsecondary institutions and local business/industry.
- Increasing rigor and relevance in instruction
Rigor and Relevance workshops are being conducted across the Commonwealth and across grade levels. Plans include additional workshops tailored to the specific needs and “levels of awareness” of districts across the state. Some workshops will be offered in basic awareness and lesson design while others will challenge teachers to develop complete units and courses of study with rigor and relevance as their framework. Recent participants are the Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative schools, the Green River Educational Cooperative schools, Pike County, Kenton County, Boone County, Graves County, Boone County, Campbell County, Carroll County, McCreary County, Pendleton County, Franklin County, Somerset Independent and Campbellsville Independent.

The Partnership for Successful Schools is collaborating with Jessamine County Public Schools and Asbury College in research that will result in further definition of rigor and relevance and tools to assess the degree of rigor and relevance in instruction.

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- Kentucky Virtual High School

The Kentucky Virtual High School (KVHS) is a vehicle by which middle and high school students are able to gain access to challenging curricula. There are a total of 77 courses offered through KVHS in core academic areas, Advanced Placement, world languages, career and technical education and electives. KVHS also offers a 9-week credit recovery program in which students focus on the content not yet mastered. KVHS encourages innovative approaches to instruction by making online course content available to teachers in traditional classrooms.

Effective July 1, the Kentucky Virtual High School, the Kentucky Virtual University, the postsecondary colleges and universities, and state agencies began the transition to a shared P20 virtual learning environment. While each entity will retain management of its content and customer base, all will share a technology infrastructure, online teacher training and end-user support services. This means that K12 and postsecondary will be able to collaborate on content development, share content and curriculum, provide online professional development together, and team teach much more easily. This approach is unique in the nation.

- Increasing participation and success in Advanced Placement

Fayette and Pike Counties are lead Kentucky districts in a National Governors Association grant program to expand Advanced Placement (AP) participation to a more diverse group of students and to increase AP success rates among all students. Also participating in the AP initiative are Marion County, Montgomery County, Carroll County, Breckinridge County, Owensboro Independent, Covington Independent, Bellevue Independent, Barren County, Jackson County, Pulaski County, Lee County, and Harlan County.

II. Every school creates personalized learning environments that provide students with support from adults towards the attainment of Individual Learning Plan goals.

- Individual Learning Plan (ILP)

704 KAR 3:305, Minimum High School Graduation Requirements, requires that beginning with the graduating class of 2013, the development of the Individual Learning Plan for each student shall begin by the end of the 6th grade year. KDE has contracted with Career Cruising to develop a web-enabled, online ILP. KDE is working with the Education Cooperatives and GEAR UP Grant partners to plan trainings across the state. Starting in Western Kentucky on September 5, teams from each school that houses 6-12th grade students will have an opportunity to be trained by Career Cruising staff and learn about ILP implementation from KDE staff. By November 15th, trainings across the state will be complete and trained schools across the state will be able to use the new web-enabled ILP tool.

- Individualizing instruction to support transition into high school

Marion County enrolls all 9th grade students in the Squires Academy with the goal of a successful transition to 10th grade. Ten teachers are assigned to this group of

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students until they make a successful transition to the 10th grade. Teachers collaborate on lessons, parent meetings, and individual student needs. All incoming 9th grade students are assigned an upperclassman as a student mentor. The student mentor provides information about the school, provides support to the students, and helps with the transition from middle to high school. Students are encouraged to join an extracurricular activity with the goal that 100% have a co/extracurricular affiliation. Incoming 9th grade students are exposed to the Kentucky Scholars Program. The mentor/business leader who has provided instruction during the middle school experience will continue to provide direction to students in the 9th grade year. EXPLORE assessment results from the 8th grade year are used for both academic and career advisement.

III. Every educator collaborates in professional learning communities to increase internal capacity to provide high quality instruction and engaging learning experiences for every student.

- Multi-district capacity building to implement new school design
In June, a two-day institute was conducted in Kenton County to support leadership teams and faculty from each school preparing for implementation of the schools of study concept (see I, above). This event was co-sponsored by the Department as a Secondary Schools Alliance activity to support the participation of teams from eight other districts considering similar redesign models: Boone County; Graves County; Boone County; Campbell County; Carroll County; McCreary County; Pendleton County; Franklin County; and, Covington Independent. Mentoring and coaching relationships are developing among these districts.
- Inclusive learning communities to promote student achievement
Phelps High School (Pike County) has developed a leadership team that consists of teachers, students, community leaders, classified staff and school administration. Together, they are transforming the school from one of the lowest performing schools in the state to one that ranks in the top ten. The Leadership Team currently consists of the administration, eight teachers (selected by the administration), six students (selected from the student leadership team), two parents (school-based decision making council members), two classified staff (volunteer), and one community leader (Volunteer). These representatives focus on establishing and communicating the high expectations that have become the standard for the school. The leadership team also provides an “ear” for all the voices of the school environment. The leadership team provides the school with a focused, purpose- driven team with a “We Can Do” mentality. With the representation of all the stakeholders, a “voice” is provided to everyone. Accepted ownership and developing a student-centered school keeps the focus on the students and an attitude that “failure is not an option”.

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- Supporting building leaders through school change
A particular focus for the upcoming year will be the creation of and support for Principal Cohort groups. These locally based principal groups will exist to help provide principals and other administrators with professional development and support specifically designed to assist them in the change initiatives and provide a network of “critical friends” for them as they move their work forward. KDE will assist in this process. As an example, Graves County invited neighboring districts to be a part of their administrative team leadership training in July 2006. This collaboration across district lines will increase the capacity of these districts to provide high-quality training for administrative leadership teams.

IV. Every student completes a standards-based curriculum that includes educational opportunities outside of the traditional high school experience as preparation for their postsecondary life.

- Project-based learning
In January 2006, the Pike County School System began the Math and Science Academy focusing on project-based learning and targeting middle and high school students. The planning committee consisted of science professors from the University of Kentucky and Pikeville College, KDE Science consultants, the Superintendent and the District Leadership Team. The Academy had four primary objectives as follows: (1) Provide an opportunity for real world partners from our community to support student learning in math and science, (2) Engage students in learning math and science concepts at a deeper level, (3) Create an awareness in our students of the career opportunities in math and science and (4) Develop students who take responsibility for their learning. One hundred and fifty middle and high school students met one evening each week for 1½ hours and for three hours during one Saturday each month. Student teams identified their areas of interest as forensics, medicine, and engineering; they planned projects, conducted research, and completed projects. Teacher coaches in math, science, and technology were available to give students guidance in their research. Community volunteers from the Pikeville College School of Osteopathic Medicine (15), forensic detectives from the Kentucky State Police (6), and engineers (4) from McCoy Elkhorn Mining, Central Appalachian Mining, and Summit Engineering attended sessions and guided students in every aspect of their projects. Students gave presentations concerning their research findings to college professors, community volunteers, parents, teachers, and central office personnel.
- Interagency Task Force on Dual Credit
The Kentucky Board of Education called for the Department to establish an Interagency Task Force to explore policy issues that impact the implementation of dual credit programs in the state and charged this group with bringing findings and recommendations back to the KBE at their April 2007 meeting. The first

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meeting of this established task force occurred on June 7, 2006. The meeting convened 23 participants representing P-12, postsecondary, parents, citizens, business, and education agencies such as Education Professional Standards Board and the Council on Postsecondary Education. Hilma Prather, a former KBE member, was named chairperson of the Task Force. At the initial meeting, the task force discussed policy issues around the topics of:

- Access
- Quality
- Certification
- Planning
- Evaluation

The next meeting of the Dual Credit Task Force is July 12, 2006. Through a grant secured by the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, the Task Force will engage the Ford Foundation in synthesizing current research, identifying the essential research questions for Kentucky, and prioritizing the work of the Task Force. Janna Vice has been invited to represent the KBE on this Task Force.

V. Every leader organizes systems in response to student needs.

- Matching teaching talent with student need

For the upcoming school year, Carroll County has redesigned the approach to teacher assignment in the high school to reduce teacher to student ratios in the 9th grade and to focus the time of their most experienced and skilled teachers on the most needy students. Class sizes in the 9th grade have been reduced to no more than 20. Teachers from the upper levels have been reassigned to the lower grades and new or less experienced teachers will not be placed in the most challenging situations. To accomplish this, the school is slightly increasing class sizes in the upper grades and will discontinue the teaching of under-enrolled Advanced Placement (AP) courses locally. Those AP courses will be made available through the Kentucky Virtual High School.

- Prioritizing early identification and intervention to reduce dropouts

State funds have been appropriated for many years to support competitive grants in school districts to reduce dropout rates and those grants have been focused on programs delivered to identified groups of students. In the most recent cycle of dropout grants, KDE shifted the focus to place emphasis on using data to recognize early warning signs of students at-risk and to provide interventions and supports on a highly individualized basis, with focus on early identification in the elementary and middle grades. School districts are being asked to develop "model" dropout prevention programs capable of being replicated in other school districts. In order to be considered a model program, there must be an evaluation component utilizing hard data to demonstrate proven effectiveness at reducing dropout rates. Staff work will focus on communicating the strategies and

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practices implemented by the “model” programs and developing learning communities around this issue.